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THE BURNING OF ST ROSALIE.

IN the penitential days of Louis XIV., when Madame de Maintenon had succeeded in putting the belles of his court in high dresses, and making the princes of the blood walk beside her sedan to mass, the dulness and devotion of Versailles, debarred from all the sweets of scandal, was somewhat enlivened by a tale which began to circulate regarding one of madame's most distinguished protégées. The young lady was in her nineteenth year, and would have been a court-beauty, had beauties been then acknowledged; but the mighty marchioness did not permit such things; and Mademoiselle de Bethune had been placed, nobody knew how, under her special protection. The blood of Sully and of Rohan mingled in the fair girl's veins. She was heiress to broad lands in Provence and Languedoc. Her birth, her beauty, and her fortune might have commanded one of the best matches on earth, or at least in France; but Madame de Maintenon and her friends, the Jesuits, were determined on making her a bride of Heaven.

Rosalie de Bethune's mother had early lost her husband in a duel fought in defence of her reputation. Subsequently, the bereaved widow was known as one of the gayest ladies at the court presided over by Madame de Montespan; but having survived her youthful charms, and come to the days of De Maintenon and devotion, she was converted to the most ascetic piety, and died, bequeathing her daughter with her whole fortune to the convent of St Rosalie. It had been founded by one of the young lady's ancestors, ages before the name of Huguenot was known to the Bethunes. Their patronage had been withdrawn from all convents since the Reformation, when they, as well as the Rohans, became Calvin's men; but the nunnery had held its ancient place on one of the dry sandy plains of Provence, leagues away from town or village, and also kept up the strict discipline of the holy St Benedict. Though of Calvinistic descent, the heiress had been reconciled to the church in her early childhood, Madame de Bethune being too much of a court-lady to hold a faith frowned on by Louis le Grand. Even the piety of her patroness had never suspected the young heiress of the slightest leaning to heresy. Nevertheless, a life spent in the convent of St Rosalie was a prospect which no eloquence could recommend to her taste. In vain the spiritual fathers, old and young, of madame's chosen society set before her the sinfulness and vanity of the world; the risks her youth ran in the midst of its many temptations; and the special judgments she might expect for despising her mother's dying wish and solemn dedication of

her to the saint whose name she had received in baptism. One assured her, that no honourable man would marry a woman with such terrors hanging over her; another found out, that there had been leprosy as well as heresy in her family, and both would certainly break out with renewed violence in the degenerate branch, which dared to refuse the saintly veil; a third reminded her that, with her fortune and talents, she had every prospect of becoming an abbess, reigning over a community of obedient sisters, extending the fame and influence of the convent, and probably attaining to the honours of canonisation.

Neither the wrath to be expected from Heaven, nor the distinctions the church had to bestow, could move the obdurate heiress of the Bethunes. She respected her mother's dying wishes, she venerated the sanctity of the cloister, half her fortune was at St Rosalie's service; but she had no vocation for monastic life, and into the convent she would not go. Unfortunately, Pere Duroque, madame's ally and the king's confessor, was first-cousin to the abbess of St Rosalie; moreover, it was a triumph for the faith that the last descendant of two such heretical families should retire with all her wealth to the solitary convent erected by her pious ancestor; yet, to give the sacrifice éclat, it must appear to be voluntary; and those ghostly counsellors were sufficiently acquainted with the world they despised and censured, to know that ladies rarely hold out against advice and persuasion so fiercely except there be a lover in the case. The usual machinery of espionage and inquiry was therefore set to work. Between (her confessor) her maid, and some inferior instruments, it was discovered that a secret correspondence had existed for some time between the heiress and the Count d'Ambois. The count was a gentleman of ancient family and very reduced estate. The king had made him an officer of the bedchamber; and his mother had contrived to get him introduced to Mademoiselle de Bethune, with whom the count said he had fallen in love; the young heiress believed him; and his mother connived, encouraged, and assisted the romance, which was carried on with great privacy, for fear of the mighty marchioness. This being made out, the necessary steps were taken. The count and his mother were admonished to break off the affair, with a promise of place and pension if they obeyed, and *lettres de cachet* if they refused. In consequence, letters and locks of hair were returned with all speed. The count found out his heart had never been affected. He set forth the same day on a tour of Italy and Spain; and his mother employed all her credit to redeem out of the hands of a money-lending goldsmith, a richly wrought crucifix, set with precious stones, and believed to

contain a chip of the true cross, which she forthwith presented to the convent of St Rosalie. The crucifix was an heirloom in the Ambois family, and according to the tradition of that noble House, had been presented to its first marquis by the famous Doge Dandolo, from the spoils of Constantinople. Their arms and quarterings were engraven on its reverse; it had descended from marquis to marquis with the château and estate; and long after these were gone, it served the family necessities with the said goldsmith and his congeners.

On this occasion, it served their fortunes also. The nuns of St Rosalie sent back their thanks, and partly promised the good offices of their patroness above. Madame d'Ambois was taken into court favour, and got a pension; her son was made keeper of the king's wardrobe; yet the point was not gained. In spite of the desertion of her lover, in spite of the fact that she was forbidden the court, that people had orders not to visit her, that her confessor placed her under an interdict at once from the mass and the theatre—the heiress of the Bethunes held out, till her spiritual advisers agreed that the Huguenot blood was in her, and some pretext was sought for sending her to the Bastille. On the very day in which she had been admonished of this design, by a guard being privately placed over her in her family hotel, which she had continued to occupy with the old *maitresse* and servants, the heiress was sitting alone in one of the great salons, musing over her unlucky wealth, which left her no choice between the Bastille and the convent. Of course, her entire household had been long in the service of her enemies, and acted as so many spies. They were all apprised of the steps about to be taken, and rather satisfied that things were coming to a climax, when the three musketeers took their station at the foot of the grand staircase. But even the porter was surprised when, in the fall of the winter twilight, a monk presented himself, and demanded leave to speak with mademoiselle's confessor. The reverend father had been installed within doors in the deceased lady's time, and knew better than to give up his vantage-ground. The monk was introduced to his study without delay, and the confessor was somewhat startled when he presented a letter from the vicar-general, commanding that Brother Cyprian of the Society of Jesus should be permitted to speak privately with Mademoiselle de Bethune.

The reverend father had seen letters from the vicar-general before; the present was his hand and seal, and Brother Cyprian looked grave and trusty enough to be employed on such a mission. He was a man about middle height; no one could have guessed his age, but there was nothing of decay about him. His frame looked thin and wiry; his face had a fixed expression, like that given by death; and his eyes, which were at once sunken and fiery, had a keen searching power in them which the confessor did not care to meet. According to the rules of the society, Brother Cyprian was his superior for the time. The monk evidently knew it, and would give no information touching his mode of procedure with the refractory heiress. The confessor had hoped for the glory of her reclamation; but the vicar-general's command must be obeyed, and Brother Cyprian was conducted to her salon.

The maid, who got absolution for peeping through the keyhole, saw them talking together, but could catch neither word nor meaning, except that her mistress looked first frightened, then thoughtful, and at last resolved; while the monk's face never altered; and the pious *femme* declared in her confession, that his eyes seemed to look through the door into her very heart. The conference did not last long, but it proved effectual. Within half an hour after Brother Cyprian's departure, which was accomplished so silently that the musketeers only

saw him pass, mademoiselle announced her determination to fulfil her mother's dying wishes, and take the veil of St Rosalie. The confessor ground his teeth over the honour and triumph he had lost, but at the same time made a vow of extensive tapers to the shrine of St Cyprian, to whose special interference he attributed the remarkable success of the monk who bore his name. Madame de Maintenon and her pious coadjutors were more sincerely delighted, though no inquiry could discover who the envoy was, or whence he came. It was even reported that the vicar-general, in his first surprise, had positively affirmed he never wrote the letter, and knew nothing of Brother Cyprian, which it was not thought politic to persevere in, though the king himself suggested that a miracle might have taken place. What matter?—the spiritual victory was gained; and the lands in Provence and Languedoc secured, for the last descendant of the Rohans and the Bethunes took the veil, and became a nun in the convent of St Rosalie.

The circumstances which induced her to take the vows, and to which a strong tinge of the miraculous was imparted in the provinces, gave the event immense interest. It was not permitted to subside. The abbess and nuns who had welcomed with open arms this valuable accession to their community, soon began to publish such tales of the devotion and austerities of Sister Rosalie—the nun had chosen and been permitted to retain her saintly name—as made their convent famous throughout the south as the dwelling-place of a probable addition to the calendar. It was asserted that, for weeks together, she never slept at all; that her prayers ascended night and day from their chapel altar; that the only bed she would consent to occupy was a flat tombstone; and her use of the scourge and haircloth, her prolonged fasts, and exhortations to do likewise, created a pious ferment of emulation among the sisterhood. Then came tales of a still more marvellous character: lights were seen in Sister Rosalie's cell which no earthly hand had kindled; voices were heard conversing with her when she prayed alone in the chapel; a plant in the convent garden, believed to be dying, revived and put forth new buds at her touch; and a nun, long bedridden, benefited so much by her prayers that she rose and walked to matins.

These miracles increased in number and magnitude as they went abroad. The powers of Sister Rosalie brought visitors from village and château to the convent. To secure an interest in her prayers for family hopes and troubles, the rich offered gifts to the altar; the peasantry, to the cellar or larder; and hundreds who laboured under such visible difficulties as a withered limb or an unmanageable sore, supplicated healing from the touch of her holy hand. The list of miracles consequently extended every day, though numbers were disappointed for want of faith. The convent bade fair to be the richest in Provence. Its fame reached Versailles; and as a weight of sanctity was just then wanted to cast into the scale against Port-Royal and the Jansenists, the whole court turned out in pilgrimages to the shrine of St Rosalie and her chosen nun. Madame de Maintenon did not take the journey, neither did the king, for it was winter, and very bad weather; but they sent a great abundance of needlework from St Cyr, and as the popular preachers came out that Lent on Sister Rosalie and her miraculous conversions, they got their full share of the glory.

The convent was still in the full blaze of its fame—the pilgrims were talking as much about the riches of its chapel, as of the miracles wrought there—when another blaze startled the scattered dwellers on the barren plain around it; for one dry, breezy night, three hours before the ringing of the matin-bell, the sky was flushed with a glare redder than that of the coming day, and the convent of St Rosalie was a flaming pile before the honest peasants could understand the cause.

Substantial as it looked, the greater part of the old fabric had been timber, dry as time and that southern air could make it. The fire, therefore, made such rapid progress, and the hamlets were so far from the nunnery, that when the nearest neighbours reached the spot, the burning roof and part of the walls had fallen in, and out of the whole establishment no living creature escaped but the portress, the wood-cutter, and the convent dog. Their habitations being in the outskirts, they could give no account of the fire, but that the convent was in flames from the glare and the noise roused them from their sleep. It was too late to make their way into the inner passages; they thought they heard cries mingling with the roar of the flames; but none of the sisterhood ever appeared, and the miracle-working nun must have perished among the rest, for she was praying, that night in the chapel, and it was first consumed. The wonders of the terrible calamity did not end here. Though guarded by the provincial police, and diligently sought over, no remnant of the costly plate or jewels with which the altar had been enriched could be found in the charred ruins. Gems, gold and silver, were known to be incombustible; but they had disappeared, though the ashes of the poor nuns were partly gathered. No inquiry, no investigation could throw light on the mysterious fire. The portress and the wood-cutter, though examined by bishops and priests, had no other story to tell; nor was any addition to their testimony ever obtained, except that of a solitary shepherd, who stated, that on the night St Rosalie was burned, a pair of mounted travellers, with black horses of unusual size, and huge saddle-bags, had passed him on the heath, and inquired the nearest way to the sea. All along the southern coast, those travellers were watched and searched for in vain. The shepherd could give no account of their faces; he said the moon was under a cloud when they passed. The peasantry began to find out that Sister Rosalie's miracles had not been genuine; a question arose among them regarding the agency by which they had been performed. The unaccountable fire did not seem to them an event of saintly origin. Nothing could be made of it, and it might encourage heresy; so the authorities, temporal and spiritual, did their best to get the convent forgotten, and the peasants of the plain took care to avoid its ruins after nightfall.

Years passed away. The Count d'Ambois and his mother kept the place and pensions they had gained by giving up the heiress of the Bethunes; but though devout and obsequious as the reigning marchioness could desire, they never advanced a step further in court favour. There was no more use for them. The strange and terrible conclusion of the business in which they had served cast an ominous shadow on them; the people in power did not care for the instruments of such a work, and what was worse, no eligible woman would hold parley with the count on matrimonial subjects. Little profit had been made by what Madame d'Ambois was in the habit of calling their great sacrifice; however, she was not the lady to be forgotten; and while just keeping clear of being troublesome enough to get banished the court, her claims were so often and so variously presented to royal notice, that at length, by way of pensioning them off, her son was appointed one of the *attachés* to the special embassy sent to Berlin, where the elector of Brandenburg was about to be crowned first king of Prussia, and madame was permitted to accompany him.

It is said that Berlin was never so full of odd and unaccountable people as at the splendid coronation of the first Frederick. Adventurers from all corners of Europe crowded to the capital of the new kingdom. Traditions still exist of the high play and fatal duels which came off in the interludes of the royal festivities. The latter were on a scale so magnificent

and prolonged as to tire the eyes and exhaust the patience of everybody concerned, except the new-made king, whose love of pomp and pageant was insatiable. They wound up with a masked ball at the palace, to which all-comers were welcome; and where, consequently, the police would be in attendance too. The company was immense, and the great salons a sight to be remembered, filled as they were with all varieties of costume. Madame d'Ambois and her son were there. The old Parisian dame, though verging on sixty, did not think herself past a mask; and it was with many complaints of the niggardly allowance assigned them, that they assumed the characters of a monk and a nun, as the least costly; they went in a hired carriage, and mixed, unnoticed, with the motley throng. Nobody knew them, and they knew nobody. The gentlemen and ladies of the embassy were all present; but the count and his mother had come from court under a cloud, and they did not consider it necessary to acknowledge their existence anywhere, much less at a masked ball. The count was an agreeable man, and his mother could talk cleverly; but that night the damp of their fortunes fell on them. In spite of masks and the best intentions, they failed to interest anybody in the gay crowd, were pronouncing it a very dull evening, and talking of going home a little after midnight, when a veiled sultana, whose magnificent Eastern costume and matchless eyes, flashing through two slits in her veil, had been the admiration of the whole assembly, came up to the corner where they stood, entered at once into conversation after the manner of masks, and, as might be expected, addressed herself especially to the count. It was a lady's voice, and a fine-toned one. A small and beautiful hand, evidently displayed for the purpose, gave further assurance of a true sultana. Perhaps her son had made an impression on some German princess; at all events, he could take care of himself, and Madame d'Ambois discreetly retired into a quiet chat with an old miner, who, she had reason to think, was a Hungarian nobleman, very tired of the masquerade, and waiting for his carriage; but she kept her eye, and her ear also, on the pair; heard the sultana offer to confess to the monk, and saw him follow her through the suite of salons, till she lost sight of them at a small side-door, covered with rich drapery, and leading to a private cabinet, where Frederick had given audience to his favourite upholsterers, and debated questions of dress and decoration for those crowning days. Madame watched and waited long, but they did not reappear. The miner left her, and went his way. She got into other chats, and did some small flirtation with the help of her court-training and some talent for the work, in spite of years and adverse fortune. But hours passed, the company began to grow thinner, and still there was no return of her son. She explored the rooms in search of him and the sultana; no trace of either could she find. There might be modes of egress from that cabinet with which she was not acquainted. Out of the side-door they had not come. There might be snares laid for the count, though he was poor and prudent. It was six in the morning, and madame would wait no longer. She made her way boldly to the cabinet; the rich drapery covered the doorway; it was but a step from the great salon, yet nobody had thought of turning in there. A single lamp lighted the small but elegant apartment; it was hung with green damask, and festooned with flowers, and there was her son, alone, reclining on a sofa, with his monk's frock drawn closely round him. He seemed asleep; but as madame stepped up to wake him, her feet splashed in something on the floor: it was blood! The mother's shrieks brought company, servants, and police into the private cabinet, and the count was found reclining in an easy attitude, but stiff and cold, with a

dagger driven deep into his left side. Its hilt was a crucifix richly wrought in gold, set with precious stones, and bearing on its reverse the arms and quarterings of D'Ambois. It was the very gift with which madame had propitiated the powers of the court, and the nuns of St Rosalie. The unfortunate woman knew it at first sight, and the circumstance was believed to have upset her brain, for she lost her reason from that hour, and would never talk of anything but the burned convent and Sister Rosalie. No research or inquiry after the veiled sultana was spared, but trace or tidings of her were never gained by the police in Prussia or elsewhere. One curious fact, however, came to light, which only involved the affair in deeper mystery—it was discovered that sundry jewellers and goldsmiths in the large German towns had purchased from passing travellers, supposed to be foreign noblemen, valuable plate and other costly articles, known to have been presented to the convent in Provence, which, though nobody could tell how, must have escaped the burning of St Rosalie.

OUR CONDEMNED COINAGE.

The English sovereign is admired, respected, and welcomed everywhere; our crown, if rather heavy and inconvenient, is not to be despised, especially Wyon's pet specimen of the genus, which, being considered by that mysterious body the Moneyers too fine for the wear and tear of everyday existence, no sooner appeared in the world than it withdrew from busy commercial life into the dignified privacy of the numismatist's cabinet. The florin, perhaps, sports too much frippery; but the shilling and sixpence, if not particularly remarkable for beauty, are at least respectable. As much can scarcely be said for their poor relations, the 'coppers' of the United Kingdom. What a bruised, battered, ill-matched, ill-conditioned lot are a shillingworth of half-pence; large and small, thick and thin, old and new, pierced with holes, dented and scarred by wanton ill-treatment, disfigured by advertising newspaper proprietors, or that numerous but disgusting class of people who persist in placing their vulgar names or initials where they are least to be desired. Bright, newly issued Victorian coppers mixed with the dull yellow coins of the Sailor King; pennies of Gentleman George, looking like miserable starvelings beside the greasy 'butcher's pennies' of Georgius Tertius—stout servants that, after sixty-three years' hard service, beat all younger competitors in size and plumpness. Then we have diminutive Irish half-pence, and Irish 'thirteens' bearing the unmistakable profile of the Iron Duke, and the national motto, 'Erin-go-bragh'; to say nothing of the three-legged Manx half-pennies, French sous, American cents, Brummagem tokens, and smooth clumps defying any attempt at recognition, which make up that heterogeneous metallic currency called, by a stretch of courtesy, small-change. Let us be thankful it is doomed; a few months, and our pockets will know it no more; but before the familiar coinage passes for ever from among us, let us review its past history.

Coke lays it down that the currency of England must be either gold or silver. At the time he wrote, no other metal had ever been coined by royal authority, excepting the circulation in Ireland of farthings, made of a mixture of silver and copper, so early as 1462. The smallness of the silver pennies, whereby they were easily lost, and the quality of the metal,

which tempted exporters to send the silver money abroad, caused a continual scarcity of small-change. To obviate this, the trading world manufactured tokens of copper, tin, and other metals. Elizabeth, finding royal enactments, backed by pains and penalties, futile to prevent the circulation of this bastard money, purposed issuing a copper coinage, a purpose she unaccountably left unfulfilled. Both James I. and Charles I. issued copper farthing tokens, but of such little intrinsic value—one pound-weight of copper being made into eleven hundred and sixty-four farthings—that it was not deemed advisable either to enforce their currency, or recognise them as legal coins; consequently, they speedily fell into contempt, and were disused. A copper coinage for the convenience of the poor seems to have been projected under the Commonwealth, as patterns are in existence bearing the dates of 1649 and 1651—the latter, rather curiously, having the image and superscription of Oliver Cromwell, as Protector of England, Ireland, and Scotland, although it was not till the end of 1653 that he was publicly invested with that proud title.

The first real copper money was coined by Charles II. in 1665, beautiful Miss Stuart sitting for Britannia; but as it was not made current at that time, the commencement of the regular coinage must be dated from 1672, when, to supply the great want of small-change, offices were opened in Fenchurch Street for the daily issue of copper farthings and half-pence. These were intrinsically worth the sums they represented, the larger coin weighing 4 dwts. 23 grains. Copper was declared a legal tender for all payments under sixpence, and it was enacted that vendors, utterers, or manufacturers of any other farthings or half-pence, should be chastised with exemplary severity. In 1680, letters-patent were granted to Sir Thomas Armstrong and Colonel Legg for twenty-one years, authorising them to coin copper half-pence weighing 107 grains Troy, for the use of his majesty's subjects in Ireland. The patentees sold their privilege to John Knox, who obtained a renewal of it from James II., when the value of the coin was fixed by a royal proclamation, declaring thirteen Irish pence equivalent to one shilling English.

When James, after his enforced abdication, landed in the sister-isle to measure swords with his rival, he revoked Knox's patent, and collected together all the old copper, brass, broken bells, useless guns, and worn pewter he could lay hands upon. This refuse, valued at threepence or fourpence a pound, was manufactured into sixpenny, twelpenny, and half-crown pieces, making four pennyworth of base metal current for five pounds sterling! Not even content with this, the half-crown was subsequently transformed into a five-shilling piece, and the shilling reduced to half its former weight. Of this irregular money, forced into currency by hanging instantly any one who demurred at taking it in exchange for goods, the amount issued was nominally £1,396,799. After the battle of the Boyne, and the flight of James Stuart, Lord Coningsby found £22,489 in the Mint, which he valued at £641, 19s. 5½d. A proclamation from William and Mary reduced this war-coinage to its intrinsic value, by declaring that henceforth the five-shilling piece was to pass for one penny, the half-crown for three farthings, and the shilling and sixpence for one farthing each.

In 1689, and the two following years, tin half-pence and farthings, with a copper centre, were coined in large quantities. In 1693, Andrew Corbett, Esq., applied for and obtained a nine years' patent, by which he undertook to coin seven hundred tons of copper into half-pence and farthings, at a rental of £1,000. This, it subsequently came out, left the patentee a profit of £13,100, the Master of the Mint having, by want of presence of mind, bound the nation to a bargain by which it lost £12,800. In consequence of his representations, Corbett's patent was, before

one year of it had expired, transferred to other hands. This, however, did not satisfy the public, which declared against the system altogether. The traders petitioned against the continuance of the patent coinage, and demanded that the copper, like the gold and silver money of the realm, should be made at the royal Mint alone. Their prayer was in vain. An arrangement was made by the government with Sir John Hearne and others, by which the latter bound themselves to coin, in seven years' time, seven hundred tons of the best English copper into rolled and milled farthings and half-pence, in the proportion of twenty-one pence to the pound of copper. They also engaged to exchange every week not less than two hundred pounds-worth of the old tin coins for new copper ones, and pay a comptroller a salary of £200 per annum. Soon after the contract was concluded, copper rose to such a price that the licensees lost £2400 in the first twelve months of their speculation. This did not stay their proceedings, however, for in 1699 the issue of half-pence and farthings was stopped by act of parliament, there being a glut of those useful media of barter.

In consequence of the abundance of small-change provided by her predecessors, there was no necessity for coining any more during Anne's reign; but towards the close of it, five pattern half-pence and the same number of pattern farthings were struck. One of the latter, bearing the date of 1714, and one bearing that of 1713, were probably circulated, as they are common enough, despite the popular belief in the rarity of a Queen Anne's farthing. The authorities of the British Museum receive from time to time letters from persons who, strong in the belief that only three of these farthings were coined, of which two are safe in the Museum already, announce that the last of the trio is in their possession. Some have actually demanded a supposition reward of £1000 for the precious little piece, the fact being that every collector possesses three or four specimens. Mr Miles, a dealer, was in the habit of keeping half-a-dozen in a drawer, on purpose to shew to any one bringing a Queen Anne's farthing for him to buy, and used to astonish many an expectant visitor by quietly offering to give three shillings for his farthing, or to sell any in the drawer for five. The Museum collection contains four in gold, four in silver, and eight in copper.

After the troubles which disturbed the beginning of the Hanoverian rule were blown over, attention was once more directed to the copper coinage. In 1717, two hundred and thirteen and a half tons of copper were delivered at the Tower, whence the metal re-issued in the shape of forty-six thousand pounds-worth of pennies and half-pennies, at the rate of two shillings and fourpence to the pound of copper; and for the first time 'Fidei Defensor' made its appearance upon the coins of the realm as one of the titles of his Britannic majesty, although it had been reckoned among them since Henry VIII. wrote in defence of the papal authority. A few years later, a half-penny was destined to raise a tremendous political storm. In 1724, in consequence of a great deficiency of copper currency in Ireland, it was resolved to grant a patent for its supply. Mr Wood, a great copper and iron master, who leased all the crown-lands in thirty-nine counties, obtained the patent for coining a hundred thousand pounds-worth of farthings and half-pence, through the king's mistress, the Duchess of Kendal. It was rumoured that the lady shared the profits with the patentee; to render it more unpopular with those it was intended to serve, the patent was passed without the lord-lieutenant or Privy Council being formally consulted; and while the actual terms were concealed in Ireland, the friends of Wood exaggerated the gains which would accrue to the speculation.

Great was the ferment in Ireland when it was known the king had treated the sister-isle as a

dependency, by giving the patent to an Englishman, and having the coin struck out of the country. Taking advantage of such a favourable opportunity, Swift determined, under cover of assailing Wood's coinage, to attack the whole system of government, and sent forth the famous *Drapier Letters*, in which the cry of 'Ireland for the Irish' was first raised. Their effect was marvellous. The lords-justices refused to issue the necessary orders for the circulation of the obnoxious money. People of all parties rushed to draw their cash from the banks, and drew their notes with the stipulation that they should be paid in silver or gold. The most rabid pamphleteer might pen treason to his heart's content with impunity, if he took the precaution of abusing the unpopular patentee, for then no jury would convict him. Every effort was made to discover the author of the *Letters*, but those in the secret were faithful; and Sir Robert Walpole was given to understand, that if he wished to arrest the writer of them, he must send ten thousand men to do it. He attempted to punish the printer, but the Dublin grand jury not only threw out the bill, but represented all persons who should endeavour to impose Wood's money on the people as enemies to the state. The parliament addressed the crown in accusation of Wood, declaring he was guilty of fraud, both as to the quantity and quality of the coins issued. They asserted that the circulation of them would be prejudicial to the revenue, destructive to commerce, and dangerous to the rights and property of his majesty's subjects. The Commons had the hardihood to declare that Wood's half-pence were not intrinsically of more than one-eighth their nominal value, and that even if the patent was honestly carried out, the country would lose a hundred and fifty per cent. by its bargain. Sir Isaac Newton had the maligned coins assayed, and found them to exceed the conditions in goodness, fineness, and weight. He might have spared the trouble. The Duke of Grafton, and Lord Cartaret after him, tried in vain to induce the people to receive the new money; and the struggle ended in its being withdrawn, the patent cancelled, and Wood compensated with a pension of £3000 for eight years. The Irish were left without small-change, but a victory had been gained over the Saxon, and they rejoiced accordingly. The Drapier became the toast of toasts, clubs were instituted in his honour, medals struck to commemorate his triumph, and the hard-hitting Dean lived for ever in the hearts of his countrymen.

In 1729, a new copper coinage—one hundred and eighty tons of half-pence, and twenty tons of farthings—was issued, by virtue of a warrant under the sign-manual of the regent Caroline; but the reign of the second George was more notable for spurious than legal copper money. In 1741, an act was passed inflicting two months' imprisonment upon coiners of base money, and compelling them to find sureties for two years. This did not intimidate the offenders. Birmingham became the centre of the manufacture, and few payments were made there without a goodly proportion of 'Brummagem half-pence'—three shillings' worth of which could be made for eightpence. With these the large employers paid their workmen, from them they passed to the tradesmen, and they distributed them over the kingdom, and to such an extent, that in 1753 it was computed that at least two-fifths of the copper money in circulation was of Birmingham origin. A knotty point was soon after raised for the decision of the lawyers, as to whether copper coins were, strictly speaking, current money, or merely money for a special purpose; the latter opinion seems to have prevailed, for the punishment awarded to utterers of false coin was not construed to extend to the utterers of counterfeit half-pence. By an act passed in the eleventh year of George III., counterfeiting copper money was declared a misdemeanour. In 1789, several advertisements appeared offering

goods in exchange for base copper; what was so obtained was sent to Scotland, where the common people, for some inexplicable reason, declined to take George III.'s half-pence; and although seven of the Brummagem half-pennies were worth little more than one penny sterling, they passed among the canny Scotch at twenty-four for a shilling. In 1792, the copper coinage was in such a debased condition as to justify the issues of provincial coins and trade tokens. At length, a new issue was resolved upon; and to the great confusion of the lower orders, a contract for coining five hundred tons of new pennies was entered into with Mr Boulton of Soho, Birmingham, who agreed to pay all expenses, and do, provide, or pay for about twenty different things not included in copper coining at the Tower. For this he was to be paid at fourpence per pound, and for the copper itself L.108 per ton. In the same year, twopenny-pieces, weighing two ounces each, were issued. These and the pence were made current by proclamation; and upon a further issue, two years afterwards, in conjunction with the smaller coins, it was declared that no person could be compelled to take more than one shilling in penny or twopenny pieces, or more than sixpence in half-pence or farthings. These latter, as our readers can judge for themselves, were not by any means equal in weight to one-half and one-fourth of the penny, Mr Boulton being permitted, in consequence of the rise of copper, to coin one pound into thirty-six half-pence instead of twenty-four. In 1805, a sudden increase in the value of the metal raised the intrinsic value of the larger copper coins by one-third, in consequence of which, great numbers found their way to the melting-pot. The following year, six hundred tons of pence, half-pence, and farthings were issued, at the rate of twenty-four, forty-eight, and ninety-six to the pound. In 1808, several combinations having been made to prevent the circulation of the old half-pence coined at the Mint, the lord mayor issued a proclamation, threatening the rigour of the law against any person refusing to take them on any pretence whatever. In 1813, suspicions were entertained of government calling in the Tower farthings and half-pence coined before 1797, at a rate below legal currency, and many refused to take them. In 1817, they were called in by proclamation, the Mint receiving them till the end of the month on the following terms: For every bag weighing fifty-six pounds, and averaging fifty-five pieces to the pound, the Mint paid six pounds eight shillings and fourpence; averaging fifty-four pieces, six pounds six shillings; and so on in proportion for any less number of pieces to the pound. In 1819, two hundred tons of new copper were issued, being the last during the reign of George III.

A new copper coinage was struck in the succeeding reign, and the currency of Ireland assimilated to that of the rest of the kingdom by the issue of fresh coins, and the calling in of the old ones. When the copper money of William IV. appeared, a slight tinge of colour in the metal excited suspicion that it contained gold, and it is said that such proved to be the fact upon examination, and that the issue was collected by Birmingham agents in various parts of the country, and melted down, which accounts for the scarcity of such coins now. We remember being ourselves, in our youth, rewarded for every William IV. half-penny we could collect; but, for all that, we believe the above story to be apocryphal, and worthy to be ranked with the Anne's farthing tradition. Almost immediately after the accession of Queen Victoria, a new coinage was prepared, which included copper money of each denomination, differing in no essential from the issues of her predecessors; fresh issues have since taken place from time to time, the only novelty being some half-farthings, which appeared and disappeared, and were heard of no more. Now the fiat has gone forth, the copper currency will soon be of the past, and we may congratulate

ourselves upon the advent of small-change that will not try our tempers and pockets to carry; and so let us give a hearty welcome to the Age of Bronze.

CONFESSIONS OF A RIFLE VOLUNTEER.

ROUSSEAU wrote Confessions, and why shouldn't I? It's true I'm not likely to become so famous as Rousseau, but I hope I shall not be so infamous either. My style is undoubtedly worse, but my morals, I hope, are better than his. I never descended to actual theft, at least in the vulgar sense of the word; and I am not going to publish, for Scandal to gloat over, the mental weaknesses and the bodily diseases of my dearest friends. Let it not be supposed, then, that, though I shall be sometimes obliged to make myself appear ridiculous, I wish to hold up to ridicule the Volunteer movement. It doesn't follow that because I am myself knock-knee'd, the rest of my company should be so also. Why, we've some of the bandiest-legged men in our company that can be seen in Merry England; and very much I admire their marching, though I find it impossible to imitate their movements, and I will state first of all why it was that I joined the Volunteers. I'm not at all blood-thirsty, nor am I particularly courageous; nobody ever observed of me, as I once heard a 'lady' remark of Jones, that 'I had quite the *air millingair*;' but I am very dyspeptic. Sitting over a desk for sometimes ten consecutive hours has a tendency to make you so, particularly if you never take any exercise beyond getting into and out of bed; and that was all I had a chance of taking, unless I could have managed to get up a little earlier, which was impossible with my sleeping faculties, or to feel less tired when I left business, which never once happened to me. As soon, therefore, as I heard that drill was good for the peptic organs, I felt an inclination to serve my country; when it was announced that Volunteers would be allowed to leave business a few hours earlier on Saturdays, my inclination was transformed into determination; when it flashed across my mind that, as soon as I displayed a military spirit, there could be no objection to my wearing a moustache (which ornament for the upper lip had always been to me an object of ambition), my determination amounted to a positive anxiety; and when I caught a glimpse of one of the Victoria Rifles in full uniform, with braid upon his bosom, and a sword at his side (though I never knew exactly why that corps should wear swords), my anxiety was heightened to longing. But, alas! the Victorias were beyond my reach; they required more leisure and more money than I could command; so I was forced to put up with a less expensive body. I joined the First Lowersex, and I got my half-holiday. Of course the first thing I did was to order my uniform, for I had always understood that the chief requisite for a soldier was a uniform: it is unnecessary to say that my notion was wrong. I put on my uniform as soon as it came home, and I am bound in common honesty to state, that I didn't look in the least military; whether it was the peculiarity in my legs (mentioned above), or a deficiency in chest and shoulder (to which I must plead guilty), or an unfortunate habit of stooping (to which I am addicted), or the want of taste of those who originated the uniform, I cannot say with any certainty; but I must conscientiously affirm, that I bore a wonderful resemblance to the errand-boys at the telegraph-offices, with a slight dash (about the cap) of a school-boy at those establishments which are conducted upon the French model.

As soon as I commenced drill (which, of course, I did not attend at first in uniform), I proceeded to the second important step—to wit, the growth of a moustache. This was a very difficult and unsatisfactory task; for either from careless and unartistic

shaving, or from some cruel freak of nature, the bristles came out with extreme irregularity—here a bunch and there a bunch—and each bristle turned in a different direction; while, such was the texture and colour thereof, that I was sometimes inclined to believe, as was suggested by an impertinent street-boy, that an old tooth-brush had grown through my lip whilst I was engaged in the process of teeth-cleaning. However, perseverance will surmount all difficulties, and by care and attention to the kindly hints of comrades in the like situation, and by copious application of remedies proposed by a confidential hair-dresser, I reduced the obstinate hairs to some degree of order, and even induced them to grow in an elegant curve from the corner of the mouth to join the whisker; but they're patchy, very patchy.

Oh, but the drill! How can I describe the horrors of the first few days' drill! The days were yet short when I joined the corps, and as I could not go until after business, it was dark when I arrived at the square (in one of the Inns of Court) where the scene of torture was enacted. I was alone; I came late, and had no brother in affliction. Those who were sufficiently advanced, were marching, and wheeling, and forming company all over the square; but others were lounging listlessly about, and, inhuman wretches that they were, ranging themselves at a short distance from me, whence they could avenge themselves for their late sufferings by gazing upon a fellow-creature in the like condemnation. The corporal placed me where the sickly rays from a gas-lamp made more hideous the grotesqueness of my movements. He put me in the attitude of 'tention—I thought it should be written *tension*, as pronounced—he adjured me to 'old up my 'ead, straighten my knees, kip my thumbs agin my forefingers, shove out my chest, putt in my stomach, and not stick my chin out like a conj'r or a balancin' a little boy on the head of a pole. No little difficulty attended a compliance with these requests of his; it was against my nature to stand upright without elevating the chin, and the tendency of my stomach was to stick out, and of my chest to go in. Moreover, the lookers-on, particularly the females, giggled, and that made my task more arduous. I really don't think I could say my alphabet if anybody giggled. However, by calling the corporal 'Sir,' I appeased his wrath, and enlisted his sympathies in my favour against the laughers, whom he rebuked—the males on the ground that 'they didn't do no better themselves at fust'; and the females, as being ready to laugh at 'anythink they didn't understand.' Thus encouraged, I made desperate efforts, and drew in my stomach after the fashion of donkeys unwilling to be saddled; I managed to drop my chin to the proper position, and hoped that time and exercise would develop my chest.

My next trial was 'standing at ease,' a position in which I fancy I must have looked more comfortable than I was; besides, I couldn't for a long while smack my right hand smartly upon my left without looking at them, which the corporal objected to. I always struck the thumb of one hand against the wrist of the other. However, after about twenty minutes' practice, I managed to perfect myself in that important movement for the repulse of an enemy. I sent the palms together with a loud report, twisted the left thumb over the right, passed the right hand over the back of the left, and never forgot to advance my left foot six inches—a feat of memory on my part which elicited the warm congratulations of the corporal. The 'balance movement without shifting ground' I found comparatively light work, for I had learned dancing; and the corporal didn't keep me half so long on one leg as M. Coulon had done. And so my first 'drill' was over. I found it much greater fun drilling in

company; and after I had tipped the corporal half-a-crown, it was astonishing how rapidly I improved. He always managed to make me a right file, of which I was very glad at the time, but rather repented of when I had another drill-master, whom I couldn't tip, and who was anything but considerate. As soon as we were intrusted with rifles, and marched with trailed arms, I seldom escaped some personal injury. If I were a front-rank man, my rear-rank man never missed an opportunity of treading upon my heels; and if I were a rear-rank man, my front-rank man always swung his rifle backwards and forwards, causing me agonies; while in 'ordering arms' from the shoulder, from an over-anxiety to appear smart, I invariably dropped the butt of my rifle upon the little-toe of my right foot. But of all the sufferings I endured, none are to be compared with those of the 'fire-and-reload-kneeling' practice. My legs, I am persuaded, were never intended to form a tripod; and though I have heard of 'sitting on your thumbs,' I am persuaded that a human being was never intended by nature to sit upon his right heel! My instructor, however, expected it, and I had to do it. For three days, I attempted it, and failed—partly because the strain upon my right knee was more than I could bear—partly because I had on thin boots, and couldn't keep my right foot perpendicular; besides, gravel doesn't agree with my knee-cap. However, on the fourth day, having provided myself with a good stiff pair of shooting-boots, I achieved the position, and was informed by the sergeant, whose opinion I dared not controvert, that I was then 'quite comfortable.' If he had not said so, I should have thought otherwise; but he had been in the Rifle Brigade, and wore medals and clasps, and of course must know. Compared with the above, I felt relief even from 'position drill,' albeit, as respects that matter, 'all my mind is clouded with a doubt'—I mean when you have to 'bring the butt of your rifle at the word "three" sharply into the hollow of your right shoulder, raise the right elbow as high as the shoulder, and keep the left elbow well under the rifle, which is to be supported by the left hand alone.' It seemed to me they might as well have told me at once to have the rheumatism in both arms. Still I submitted, for the sake of my country and my half-holiday; and I have at last become so steady, that I can put a penny close to the muzzle of my rifle, 'present,' and snap the trigger, without dropping the coin more than five times out of six. Another exercise which I practised was voluntary, but painful, yet, as it was strongly recommended by the sergeant for the development of my chest, I persevered in it like a spider; and this is the fashion of it—take your rifle in both hands, the right grasping the small of the butt, and the left the upper band; hold it in front of you horizontally, at the full extent of your arms, the trigger-plate towards you, and the hammer of course from you. At the word 'one,' throw your arms forward about six inches; 'two,' lift them up to their full extent (turning the hammer upwards), so as to bring the rifle horizontally over the crown of your head; 'three,' bring the rifle sharply down behind your back as far as you can, keeping your knuckles turned from you. You'll find, if you do this fifty times, that it's very good for the chest.

Marching in sections and subdivisions, I don't think I shall ever master; I never know whether I'm in a right or left subdivision, and the language I have caused my officers to use is awful: I almost think it would be a Christian act upon my part if I were to retire. Forming four deep, too, is another *crux* to me: it's easy enough, I know, even if you're a left file, and if you're a right file, of course you've only to stand still—I ought to be able to take one pace to the rear with my left foot, and then one pace to the right with my right foot; indeed, I *can* do it when

I'm alone in my own room. I got four pair of boots, and went through the drill with *them* quite well; but as soon as the boots become inhabited by human beings, I'm abroad again. Nevertheless, since I have joined the movement, my appetite is better, I must allow; and my cousin thinks I'm more upright, although I can't get my legs straight.

SEA-SHELLS.

WE propose to gossip upon no subject of learned disquisition; upon no highly sounding classifications of malacology, conchology, and other ologies of the naturalist; not of the food which the inhabitants of shells furnish to man, nor on the mode in which the shell-fishes build the houses which they inhabit; but on some of the manifold and remarkable uses to which the ingenuity of artisans and others has enabled them to apply the shells picked up on sea-margins and river-beaches.

And, first, if beauty is a 'use'—if it be useful to us to have beautiful objects to look at, then do shells indeed offer charming gifts from nature to man. The rude tribes set the example here, and civilised nations follow.

The *chank* volute shells of India are sliced up with circular saws and other cutting instruments, and made into bangles, armlets, bracelets, anklets, finger-rings, toe-rings, and other personal ornaments much coveted by the natives. Some of these slices are richly carved, gilt, and otherwise decorated. There is a very large consumption of these shells in India; because it is customary among the Hindus to throw into the Ganges, or some other holy river, the shell-ornaments which have belonged to a person deceased—as an offering, possibly, to some of their deities, or to avoid the chance of the ornaments being worn by persons of lower caste. There is a profitable fishery for chank shells all round the coast; and experienced divers bring them up from two or three fathoms depth of water. Ceylon alone yields three or four millions of them in a year, valued at L.10,000, which mostly find a market at Calcutta. A very fine specimen will fetch its weight in gold. The volute shells, of which the chank is one variety, afford a curious illustration of the value which men place upon *uniques*—that is, articles prized, not because they are beautiful or valuable, but because there are few of them; the curls or twists of the volute generally turn to the left, but when they turn to the right, a higher price is demanded and given, because of the rarity. Connoisseurs in old pictures, old books, old china, old articles of *vertu*, will readily believe this, for they understand this kind of craving. Concerning head-dresses, neck-ornaments, &c., made of shells, every one knows how largely these are to be met with in the islands and semi-barbarous countries of southern regions. But it was not until the Great Exhibition of 1851 that we had the means of knowing how exquisitely this kind of work is done at the Bahamas; ornaments were there exhibited, in which it was difficult to know whether most to admire the graceful forms, the brilliant colours, or the tasteful grouping of the shells.

Of *pearls*, what need we say? All the world knows them, and all who know them, admire them. The best pearl-oysters are found off the coast of Ceylon; the next, in the Persian Gulf; and inferior kinds in the Pacific, and the West Indies. There are a few occasionally met with in Scotland and Ireland. The Tay and the Ythan are the Scottish rivers most highly reputed for the pearl-fishery; and it is constantly affirmed by tradition, that the large pearl in front of the Scottish crown was obtained in the latter river. Attempts are being made to *cultivate* pearls in Bavaria, by treating the oysters to a particular food, and subjecting them to careful treatment; but we are not aware that any success has yet attended

this curious project. The produce of the pearl-fishery in Ceylon sometimes amounts to L.40,000 per annum. It has much of the uncertainty of a lottery in it; only a few shells contain any pearls; the number in each may be only one, or may amount to a hundred; and the quality varies greatly. The bad pearls are dissolved or ground up, and used as medicines by some of the natives; the good specimens are sent to market; the Persian Gulf pearl-fishery employs 30,000 men and 3000 boats, and constitutes the chief source of revenue of the imaum of Muscat. Some of the small inferior pearls are scarcely worth preserving; while such a one as that which belongs to the wealthy Mr Hope, and which is nearly as large as an egg, is worth—anything that a millionaire is willing to give for it; for such rarities have no fixed market value.

Besides shells and pearls *au naturel*, there is a kind of fine art depending on a particular use of shells. We speak of *shell-cameos*. This branch of art has lately sprung up into much importance. The shells fitted for it are hard and dense in texture, and consist of two or three layers of different tints. By cutting away certain portions of the upper layer, and carving or engraving the rest, a cameo may be produced in relief on a ground of a different colour. The varieties are numerous. The purple *volute* shell may be worked down from a brown surface to a dark-yellow substratum, or from a dark-yellow surface to a white; *cowry* shells will often work down from a white to a violet; some shells will work down from a beautiful mother-of-pearl surface to a coloured opaque substratum. The shell-mosaic workers of France, who chiefly carry on this branch of art, employ *helmet* shells, *bull's mouth* shells, *stromb* shells, *conch* shells, and many other kinds. Some of the most favourite combinations are, white upon dark grounds, pale salmon on orange, and yellow on pink. Such cameos are now made in France to the value of L.40,000 or L.50,000 annually.

While speaking of shells in connection with fine art, it may be well to observe that the exquisite forms of some of those natural products have not escaped attention, regarded as models or patterns for man to imitate. Professor Simmonds, to whose published lecture on shells we are indebted for much curious information, says: 'From the extreme diversity and elegance of their forms, shells are deserving the attentive study of the decorator and designer. Beautiful designs have, it is true, been copied from the univalve testaceæ; and as ornaments for stucco-work, cornices, centre-pieces for ceilings, elegant curvatures, &c., for chimney-pieces, they have been much admired. But there is a wide field laid open to the intelligent and thoughtful architect, builder, and designer, in the varied and elegant forms of the mollusca, whether of land or sea, fluvial, oceanic, or fossil. In this scarcely touched field, the ingenious draughtsman, the clever artist, and the educated workman, may cull numberless elegant forms and groups for ornamentation, whether it be in stone or compe, wood or metal, for exterior or interior building adornment. Let the workmen seek among the finny tribes and shelly wonders of the great deep for subjects to aid his decorative designs.' After mentioning certain publications on shells and shell-fish, Professor Simmonds proceeds: 'Glancing over the plates and figures, he will not fail to observe various symmetrical systems of form and combination, and to glean new ideas of beauty and general arrangement from the fanciful but chastely elegant whorls, spires, curves, and convolutions of shells. "The hand that made them is divine;" and there is beauty, order, and symmetry in all their parts. The cones, the volutes, the trochis, the scallops, the ammonites, the pyramids, the clams, the nautilus, and a hundred others, will afford him hints and suggestions for arrangement and grouping of forms of bordering, centering, corning, arching, and ornamentation generally, which he would seek in vain

elsewhere. Either isolated or in combination, some of their elegance of form, beauty of arrangement, and regularity of radiation, may be made use of. If painters, sculptors, and artists can so readily avail themselves of all the beauties for which shells are characterised, the architect, builder, and decorator should certainly not overlook the ideas their forms may suggest.' As this *Journal* passes into the hands of workmen and decorators, as well as other classes of society, we beg to recommend this suggestion to their careful consideration; it is sound, because it is founded on natural beauties, irrespective of the vagaries of fashion.

Certain parts of certain shells are used in the production of dyes, pigments, and inks. The *purpure* yield a beautiful purple, which was well known to the ancients. There is a small vein or sac in the fish, containing only a few drops of liquor; but the colour of this liquor is so intense, that it goes a great way as a dye-material. The tint of purple varies according as the fish has lived among mud, sea-weed, or pebbles. Several kinds of *murex* yield various shades of purple and crimson. The *sepia* or cuttle-fish gives out a fluid of intense blackness, which the ancients employed as ink. These uses of shells and fishes, for dye and pigment materials, were more common in early times than at the present day; the resources are now much extended in other and more easily available directions.

Pearls we have talked of, but not *mother-of-pearl*—a name which significantly tells of one particular theory concerning the origin of pearls, and constitutes an inside lining to many kinds of shells, chiefly of the oyster kind. The specimens are mostly bought up by dealers at Singapore and Manila, and by them sold for use in Europe and other regions. So far as our own country is concerned, the consumption centres chiefly at Birmingham and Sheffield—the thicker specimens for the handles of knives and other articles, and the thin for buttons, counters, porte-monnaies, card-cases, ladies-work implements, spectacle-cases, and countless other purposes. The shells best suited for Sheffield use are six inches or more in diameter, and of considerable thickness. The 'haft and scale makers' of that busy town are a distinct body of artisans and manufacturers, who have nothing to do with the steel of the cutlery instruments for which the handles are intended. The entire handle is with them a 'haft,' whereas the 'scale' is the thin material which frequently covers the haft—mostly of some more costly material, such as mother-of-pearl, tortoise-shell, or ivory, than the substance beneath. The pearl-handle makers work at nothing else. They saw the shells into thin films or oblong pieces; and, in order to do this, they are obliged to keep the shell constantly wetted, as otherwise its extreme hardness would heat and blunt the saw. It is, like many others by which beautiful articles are produced, a dirty occupation; and the work-rooms are strongly imbued with the odour of fish. After the sawing, the pieces are fashioned, ground, and polished into the requisite forms. At Birmingham, a very large quantity of mother-of-pearl is used, chiefly to inlay japanned papier-maché ornaments; it is not, however, actually sunk into recesses cut to receive it, but is laid on the surface, the level being reproduced by copious varnishings and repeated polishings.

Mussel and *snail* shells often exhibit that phenomenon of differently coloured layers, which gives rise to the production of the shell-mosaics already described. The *helmet* shell yields a material for the handles of umbrellas from its thick part; while the thinner portions are used as borderings and decorations for work-boxes, watch-stands, and other ornamental articles. Thin films of *oyster* shell, smoked in a particular way, are made into the greatcoat buttons so often affected by a certain class of 'fast' men. Some shells are embossed or engraved on the surface with portraits, inscriptions, &c.; this is effected either

mechanically by the aid of cutting instruments, or chemically by the corrosive action of certain acids. Large and coarse specimens receive the inscriptions of tombstones in some of our cemeteries. A few of the large and elegant forms of shell are made to serve as graceful receptacles for hanging plants in rooms and green-houses. Some varieties, such as the *butter* shell of New Zealand, on having a bluish outer layer ground away at certain parts, lay bare a splendid gold colour beneath. The clam shell of the Eastern Archipelago is eagerly sought after for the uses it renders; a pair will sometimes weigh five or six hundred pounds; the fish, called in some places the 'Dutchman's cockle,' is eaten as a coarse but not unpalatable food. The shells are used whole in some Roman Catholic countries as receptacles for holy-water; more usually, however, they are cut up into arm-rings and other ornaments. Some of the specimens, perfectly white, admit of being polished like the finest marble. The clam anchors itself to rocks by a cable of its own making, so thick and strong that nothing less than a blow from an axe will sever it. The *byssus*, or silky fibre of the *pinna*—long, fine, lustrous, and strong—is susceptible of being spun and wrought up like silk into gloves, stockings, and other articles; it was much used by the ancients, and would be more used than it is by the moderns, were not the produce of the silk-worm so much more abundant. Small shells called *cowries*—clear, white, and glossy—are used as money in some of the countries of Asia and Africa. They rise and fall in value, like other commodities, by variations in supply and demand; but a penny will usually exchange for nearly two hundred of them in India. So cheap are many articles of food in plentiful seasons in that country, that one single cowry is often the purchase-price for a small quantity of fruit or vegetable. It is said that there is a church in India, for the labour of which the workmen were paid wholly in cowry shells—more than thirty millions in number; how the necessity for this singular mode of payment arose, does not appear. We import hundreds of tons of cowries annually, and re-sell them to Africans. It has been found that cowries may be converted into a glaze for earthenware and an enamel for clock-faces. We have already spoken of the *cuttle-fish*, which yields the intensely black fluid *sepia*. There is, besides this, a calcareous spongy bone or plate which strengthens the back of the fish, and which is employed by artists and workmen as a sort of sand-paper or emery-paper, for polishing varnish, paint, wood, and soft metal, and for making pounce. The *conch* shell, already mentioned in reference to other uses, with one end cut off, is often used as a horn or trumpet in some of the tropical countries. In sugar plantations, the signal for going to and from dinner is given to the slaves by a blast from such a trumpet, called the 'shell blow.' Various species of the *triton* shell may in like manner be used as horns or trumpets. The *ear shell* or *halotis*, named on account of its partial resemblance in shape to the ear, has a beautiful iridescent surface, which causes it to be sought by Birmingham manufacturers as a material for inlaying or veneering, like mother-of-pearl. Some univalve shells are used as rustic lamps. Large scallop shells are often employed in skimming milk and slicing butter. Among nations not very far advanced in the useful arts, we find thin pellucid films of large oyster shells used as a substitute for glass; deeply hollowed shells used as cups and spoons; sharpened fragments used as razors and tweezers; pointed fragments, or whole shells of certain kinds, used as fish-hooks, harpoon-points, and arrow-points.

Shells, chiefly on account of the lime they contain, are often valuable both as a material for cement and as a fertiliser for the ground. Shell sand, the detritus of shells, has brought into a moderately fertile state many a sea-beach. Near Calcutta, there are immense

stores of the *telebralia telescopium*, exposed in heaps to kill the fish by the heat of the sun's rays, preparatory to the grinding up of the shells for making lime. Some kinds of burnt shell make an almost imperishable cement when combined with lime and sand. Ground cockle and oyster shell make a good covering for gravel-walks. On the sea-board of America, there are large numbers of persons who gain a living by collecting shells for these and similar purposes.

Let us say a last word in favour of a sort of sea-scavenger—a fish which has usually rather a bad reputation, but which is, nevertheless, worthy of something like thanks from us. This fish is a species of mussel, the *Mytilus lithophagus*. It works much mischief on the hulls of ships, and on this account it is regarded by shipowners as an enemy; yet a Westminster reviewer, quoted by Professor Simmonds, points out another action of this fish more than equivalent on the side of advantage. 'Were the fragments of wrecks and masses of stray timber, that would choke harbours, and clog the waves, permitted to remain undestroyed, the loss of life and injury to property that would result would soon far exceed all the damage done and dangers caused by the teredo. This active shell-fish is one of the police of Neptune—a scavenger and cleanser of the sea. It attacks every stray mass of floating and sunken timber with which it comes in contact, and soon reduces it to harmlessness and dust. For one ship sunk by it, a hundred are really saved; and while we deprecate the mischief and distress of which it has been the unconscious cause, we are bound to acknowledge that, without its operation, there would be infinitely more treasure buried in the abysses of the deep, and more venturesome mariners doomed to watery graves.'

THE WILD HUNTRESS.

CHAPTER XLV.—ATTEMPT TO STAMPEDE.

WE make an attempt to re-open the interrupted parley. In vain. Whatever amicable design the Red-Hand may have conceived, is now changed to a feeling of the most deadly hostility. There is no more 'talk' to be drawn from him—not a word. In the midst of his warriors, he stands scowling and silent. None of the chiefs speak. The common braves make answers to our overtures; but only by the insult of a peculiar gesture. Any hopes we may have conceived of a pacific termination to the encounter, die within us as we note the behaviour of the band.

Whether the Indian was in earnest in the proposal he had made, or whether it was a mere scheme to get our scalps without fighting for them, we could not tell at the time. There was an air of probability that he was honest about the matter; but, on the other hand, his notorious character for hostility to the white race contradicted this probability. I had heard, moreover, that this same chief was in the habit of adopting such plans to get white men into his power.

We had no time to speculate upon the point; nor yet upon that which puzzled us far more—how he had arrived at the knowledge of who we were! What could he have known of the 'White Eagle of the forest,' or the 'young soldier-chief'?

So far as I was myself concerned, the title might have been explained. My uniform—I still wore it—might have been espied upon the prairies? The Indians are quick at catching an appellation, and communicating it to one another. But the figurative sobriquet of the young hunter? That was more specific. The Red-Hand could not have used it accidentally. Impossible. It bespoke a knowledge of us, and our affairs, that appeared mysterious and inexplicable. It did not fail to recall to our memory the apparition that had astonished Wingrove in the morning.

There was no opportunity to canvass the question—

only time for the most vague conjectures—before the savages began to fire at us—discharging in rapid succession the guns which they had loaded.

We soon perceived that we had little to fear from this sort of attack. Unless by some stray bullet, there was not much danger of their hitting us. Their clumsy *manège* of the fire-arms was evident enough. It added to the probability, that the chief had been in earnest about our giving instructions to his warriors.

Still was there some degree of danger. The guns they had got hold of were large ones—most of them old muskets of heavy calibre—that cast their ounces of lead to a long distance. We heard their bullets pattering against the rocks, and one or two of them had gone whistling over our heads. It was just possible to get hit; and, to avoid such an accident, we crouched behind our parapet, as closely as if we had been screening ourselves from the most expert marksmen.

For a long time, we did not return their fire. O'Tigg was desirous of trying another shot with his piece, but I forbade it. Warned by what they had witnessed, the Indians had retired beyond even the range of the sergeant's fusil.

Two parties of savages now separate from the main body; and, taking opposite directions, go sweeping at full gallop round the butte. We divine their object. They have discovered the position of our animals: the intention is to *stampede* them.

We perceive the importance of preventing this. If we can but keep our animals out of the hands of the savages until darkness comes down, then may there be some prospect of our escaping by flight. True, it is only a faint hope. There are many contingencies by which our design may be defeated, but there are also circumstances to favour it; and to yield without a struggle, would only be to deliver ourselves into the hands of an unpitying foe. The last words uttered by the Arapaho chief have warned us that death will be preferable to captivity.

We are sustained by another remembrance.

We know that we are not the first white men who have been thus surrounded, and who afterwards contrived to escape. Many a small band of brave trappers have sustained the attack of a whole Indian tribe; and though half of their number may have fallen, the others lived to relate the perilous adventure. The life of a determined man is difficult to take. A desperate sortie often proves the safest defence; and three or four resolute arms will cut a loophole of escape through a host of enemies.

Some such thoughts, flitting before us, hindered us in that hour from succumbing to despair.

It was of the utmost importance, then, to prevent our animals from being swept off; and to this end were our energies now directed. Three of us faced towards them—leaving the fourth to watch the movements of the enemy on the other side of the butte.

Once more the wild cry rings among the rocks, as the red horsemen gallop around—rattling their shields, and waving their weapons high in air. This is done to affright our animals, and cause them to break from their fastenings.

These demonstrations have not the desired effect. The mules prance and hinnie; the horses neigh and bound over the grass; but the long boughs bend without breaking; and acting as elastic springs, give full play to the affrighted animals. Not a rein snaps, not a lazo breaks, not a loop slides from its hold!

The first skurry is over; and we are gratified to see the four quadrupeds still grouped around the tree, and fast as ever to its branches.

The *stampede* has proved a failure.

Another swoop of the wild horsemen ends with like result; and then another.

And now closer and closer they come—galloping in all directions, crossing and meeting, and wheeling

and circling—with shrill screams and violent gesticulations.

As they pass near, they hide behind the bodies of their horses. An arm over the withers, a leg above the crop—are all of the riders we can see. It is useless to fire at these. The horses we might tumble over at pleasure; but the men offer no point to aim at. A red face gleams through the tossing locks of the mane; but, ere we can take sight upon it, it is jerked away.

For a considerable time, this play was kept up—the Indians all the while yelling as if engaged in some terrible conflict. As to ourselves, we were too wary to waste our shots upon the horses, and we reserved them, in the hope of being able to 'draw a bead' on some rider more reckless than the rest.

The opportunity soon offered. Two of the savages exhibited a special determination to succeed. Knife in hand, they careered around—evidently with the design of cutting the bridles and lazoos. Cheered on by the shouts of their comrades, they grew less careful of their skins, and at length make a dash towards the *cavallada* under the tree. When almost within hand-reach of the fastenings by which the mules were held, one of the latter slewed suddenly round, and sent her heels in a well-directed fling against the head of the foremost horse. The steed instantly wheeled, and the other coming behind followed the same movement—exposing both the riders to our aim. They made an effort to throw themselves to the other side of their horses; but the opportunity was lost. Our rifles were too quick for them. Two of us fired at the same instant; and as the smoke cleared away, the red robbers were seen sprawling upon the plain.

Our shots had proved fatal. Before we could reload, the struggles of the fallen horsemen had ended; and both lay motionless upon the grass.

The lesson was sufficient for the time. Warned by the fate of their comrades, the Indians, although still continuing their noisy demonstrations, now kept well out of the range of our rifles. There appeared to be no others in the band desirous of achieving fame at such risk of life.

CHAPTER LVII.

OUR WEAK POINT.

The savage horsemen continued their circling gallop around the butte—one occasionally swooping nearer; but covered by the body of his horse, in such a way that it was impossible to sight him.

These manoeuvres were executed by the young warriors, apparently in a spirit of bravado, and with the design of shewing off their courage and equestrian skill. We disregarded the harmless demonstrations—watching them only when made in the direction of our animals.

At intervals, a hideous face, peeping over the withers of a horse, offered a tempting target. My comrades would have tried a flying shot had I not restrained them. A miss would have damaged our prestige in the eyes of the enemy. It was of importance that they should continue to believe in the infallibility of the fire-weapon.

After a time, we observed a change of tactics. The galloping slackened, and soon came to an end. The horsemen threw themselves into small groups, at nearly equal distances apart, and forming a ring round the butte. Most of the riders dismounted, a few only remaining upon their horses, and continuing to dash backward and forward, from group to group.

These groups were beyond the range of our rifles, though not of the sergeant's musket. But the savages—both mounted and afoot—had taken care to make ramparts of their horses.

At first, this manoeuvre of our enemies appeared to

have no other object than that of placing themselves in a position to guard against our retreat.

A moment's reflection, however, told us that this could not be the design. There were but two points by which we could pass down to the plain—at the two ends of the trail—why then should they surround the butte?

It could not be for the purpose of cutting off our retreat? That could be done as effectually without the circular deployment.

Their design soon became apparent. We observed that the muskets were distributed among the groups—three or four to each. With these they now opened fire upon us from all sides at once—keeping it up as fast as they could load the pieces.

The effect was to render our situation a little more perilous. Not having the means to make our parapet continuous, we were at several points exposed. Had we had good marksmen to deal with, we should have been in danger. As it was, we drew well back towards the centre of the platform; and were screened by its outer angles.

Now and then, a shot struck the rock, sending the splinters in our faces; but all four of us escaped being hit by the bullets.

We had made an observation that rendered us uneasy: we had observed a weak point in our defence. We wondered that our assailants had not also noticed it.

Around the butte, and close up to its base, lay many boulders of rock. They were prisms of granite, that had become detached from the cairn itself, and rolled down its declivity. They rested upon the plain, forming a ring co-centric with the circular base of the mound. Many of these boulders had a diameter of six feet, and would have sheltered the body of a man from our shots. Others, again, rested along the sloping sides of the butte—also of prismatic shapes, with sides overhanging. These would form ramparts for our assailants. Even the spreading cedars would hide a human form from sight. They were the trailing juniper of the western wilds—very different from the Virginian cedar. They were of broad bushy forms, with stunted stems, and tortuous branches, densely set with a dark acetalous foliage. They covered the sides of the butte, from base to middle height, with a draping perfectly impenetrable to the eye. Though there was no path save that already mentioned, assailants, active as ours, might easily have scaled the declivity.

Should the Indians make a bold dash up to the base of the butte, then drop their horses, and take to the rocks, they might advance upon us without risk. While working their way up the slope, they would be safe from our shots, sheltered by the projecting boulders, and screened by the trees. We should not dare to expose ourselves over the edge of the platform, since others, remaining behind the rocks below, would cover us with their aim; and the shower of arrows would insure our destruction. Those who should scale the mound, would have us at their mercy. Assailing us simultaneously from all sides, and springing upon the platform, ten to one against us, they would soon overpower us?

This was the observation we had made, and the reflections that resulted from it. We only wondered that our enemies had not yet perceived the advantage of this plan of attack, and since they had neglected it so long, we were in hopes that the design would not occur to them.

We soon perceived our error, and that we had miscalculated the cunning of our dusky foes. We saw the Indians once more taking to their horses. Some order had reached them from the Red-Hand, who stood conspicuous in the midst of the largest group of his warriors.

The movement set on foot by this order was similar to that already practised in the endeavour to

stampede our animals; but now all the band took part in it—even the chiefs mounting and riding among the rest. The marksmen alone remained afoot, and continued to fire from behind their horses.

Once more the mounted warriors galloped in circles round the butte. We perceived that at each wheel they were coming nearer, and could divine their intent. It was the very plan of attack we had been apprehending. We could tell by their gestures that they were about to charge forward to the butte.

Regardless of the fire from the plain, we crept back to the edge of the parapet, and pointed our pieces towards the circling horsemen. We were excited with new apprehensions; but the caution to keep cool was passed around; and each resolved not to fire without being certain of his aim. On our first shots would depend the success or failure of the attack.

As before, we arranged that two only should fire at a time. If the shots should prove true, and two of our foes fall to them, it might check the charge, perhaps repulse it altogether. Such often happens with an onset of Indians—on whom the dread of the fire-weapon acts with a mysterious effect.

On the other hand, should we miss, our fate was sealed and certain. We should not even have the choice of that last desperate resort, on which we had built a hope. We should be cut off from all escape, for our animals would be gone before we could reach them. On foot, it would be idle to attempt flight; even could we have run the gantlet through their line, we knew they would overtake us upon the plain.

We felt like men about to throw dice for our lives, and dice too that were loaded against us.

Nearer and nearer they come, until they are coursing within fifty yards of the butte, and scarcely twice that distance from our guns. Were their bodies uncovered, we could reach them; but we see only their hands, feet, and faces—the latter only at intervals.

They draw nearer—now they are riding within the circle of danger. Our elevation gives us the advantage. We begin to see their bodies over the backs of their horses. A little nearer yet, and some of these horses will go riderless over the plain!

They have perceived their danger—one and all of them. Notwithstanding their cries of bravado, and mutual encouragement, they dread to make the final rush. Each fears that himself may be the victim.

Our heads were growing dizzy with watching them, and we were still expecting to see some of them turn their horses, and dash inward to the butte; when we heard a signal-cry circulating through their ranks. All at once the foremost of them was seen swerving off to the plain, followed by the whole troop!

Before we could recover from our surprise, they had galloped far beyond the range of our guns, and once more come to a halt!

CHAPTER LVIII.

A BAMPART ON WHEELS.

For a time, our hearts throbbed more lightly: the pressure of apprehension was removed. We fancied the savages had either not yet become fully aware of the advantage of storming our position, or that the certainty of losing some of their number had intimidated them from making the attempt. They had abandoned their design, whatever it was; and intended waiting for night—the favourite fighting-time of the Indian.

This was just what we desired; and we were congratulating ourselves that the prospect had changed in our favour.

Our joy was short-lived: the enemy shewed no sign of repose. Clustered upon the plain, they still kept to their horses. By this, we knew that some other movement was intended.

The chiefs were again in the centre of the crowd—the Red-Hand conspicuous. He was heard haranguing

his warriors, though we could not guess the purport of his speech. His gestures told of fierce rage—his glances now and then directed towards us betokened a spirit of implacable vengeance.

At the conclusion of his speech, he waved his hand in the direction of the wagon. The gesture appeared to be the accompaniment of a command. It was promptly and instantly obeyed. A dozen horsemen dashed out from the group, and galloped off. Their course was directed up the valley—towards the scene of their late strife.

Those who had remained upon the ground dismounted, and gave their horses to the grass. This might have led us to anticipate a suspension of hostilities, but it did not. The attitude of our enemies was not that of purposed repose. On the contrary, they came together afoot; and engaged in what appeared to be an eager consultation. The chiefs spoke in turn. Some new scheme was being discussed.

We watched the party who had ridden off. As anticipated, the wagon proved to be the butt of their excursion. Having reached it, they halted; and, dismounting, became grouped around it.

It was impossible for some time to tell what they were doing. Even the glass did not reveal the nature of their movements. There were others besides those who rode up; and the white tilt appeared in the midst of a dark cluster of men and horses.

Their errand at length became obvious. The crowd was seen to scatter. Horses appeared harnessed to the tongue—the wheels were in motion—the vehicle was turning round upon the plain. We saw that some half-dozen horses were hitched on, with men seated upon their backs as teamsters.

They make a wheel, and head down the valley in the direction of the butte. They are seen urging the animals into a rapid pace; and the wagon, no longer loaded, leaps lightly over the smooth sward. The horses are spurred into a gallop; and amidst the shouts of the savage drivers, drag the huge vehicle after them with the rough rapidity of a mountain howitzer.

In a few minutes, it advances to the ground occupied by the dismounted band, who surround it upon its arrival.

We upon the summit have a full view of all. We recognise the well known Troy wagon—with its red wheels, blue body, and ample canvas roof. The lettering, 'TROY, NEW YORK,' is legible on the tilt—a strange sight in the midst of its present possessors!

What can be their object with the wagon?

Their actions leave us not long in doubt. The horses are unharnessed and led aside. Half-a-dozen savages are seen crouching under the axles, and laying hold of the spokes. As many more stand behind—screened from our sight by the tilt-cloth, the body, and boxing. The pole projects in the direction of the mound.

Their object is now too painfully apparent. Without thinking of the analogy of the Trojan horse, we see that this monster of a modern Troy is about to be employed for a similar purpose.

Yes—shielded by the thick planking of its bed—by its head and hind boards—by its canvas covering and other cloths which they have cunningly spread along its sides, the savages may approach the mound in perfect safety. Such is their design.

With dismay, we perceive it. We can do nought either to retard or hinder its execution. Those under the vehicle can 'spoke' the wheels forward, without in the least exposing their bodies to our aim. Even their hands and arms are not visible: buffalo robes and blankets hang over, draping the wheels from our sight. Those behind are equally well screened; and can push forward the huge machine, without risk of danger.

We note all these circumstances with feelings of

keen apprehension. We adopt no means to hinder the movement: we can think of none, since none is possible. We are paralysed by a sense of our utter helplessness.

We are allowed but little time to reflect upon it. Amidst the shouts of the savages, we hear the creaking of the wheels; we behold the mass in motion!

Onward it comes towards the mound—advancing with apparently spontaneous motion, as of some living monster—some horrid mammoth approaching to destroy and devour us!

Had it been such a monster, its approach could not have inspired us with a greater dread. We felt that our destruction was equally certain. The savages would now surround us—advance up the rocks—spring upon us from all sides at once; and, although we might fight to the death—which we had determined to do—still must we die. The knowledge that we should die fighting, and with arms in our hands—that we should fall upon the corpses of our enemies, avenging death before parting with life—this knowledge was but a feeble ray to support and cheer us. Though no cowards—not one of us—we could not look forward to our fate, without a feeling of dread.

The certainty of that fate we could no longer question. Even the time seemed to be fixed. In a few minutes, the assailants would be upon us; and we should be engaged in the last struggle of our lives, without the slightest hope of saving them.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE ASSAULT.

With the prospect of such fatal issue—so proximate as to seem already present—no wonder that our hearts were dismayed at sight of the wagon moving towards us. As the inhabitants of a beleaguered city behold with fear the advance of the screened catapult or mighty 'ram,' so regarded we the approach of that familiar vehicle—now a very monster in our eyes.

We were not permitted to view the spectacle in perfect security. As the wagon moved forward, those who carried the muskets drew still nearer under cover of their horses, and once more played upon us their uncertain but dangerous shower. With the bullets hissing above and around us, we were forced to lie low—only at intervals raising our heads to note the progress of the party intended to storm.

Slowly but surely the machine moved on—its wheels turning under the impulse of brawny arms—and impelled forward by pressure from behind. To fire upon it would have been of no avail; our bullets would have been thrown away. As easily might they have pierced through a stockade of tree-trunks.

O for a howitzer! but one discharge of iron grape to have crushed through those planks of oak and ash—to have scattered in death that human machinery that was giving them motion!

Slowly and steadily it moved on—stopping only as some large pebble opposed itself to the wheel—then on again as the obstacle was surmounted—on till the intervening space was passed over, and the triumphant cheer of our savage foes announced the attainment of their object.

Risking the straggling shots, we looked over. The wagon had reached the base of the butte; its tongue was forced up among the trees—its body stood side by side with the granite prism.

The storming-party no longer required it as a shield; they would be sufficiently sheltered by the great boulders; and to these they now betook themselves, passing from one to the other, until they had completely surrounded the butte.

We observed this movement, but could not prevent it. They flitted from rock to rock, like red spectres; and with the rapidity of lightning flashes. In vain we attempted to take aim; before a barrel could be brought to bear upon them, they were gone out of

sight. We ourselves, galled by the leaden hail, were forced to withdraw behind our ramparts.

A moment of suspense followed. We knew not how to act: we were puzzled by their movements, as well as by the silence in which they were making them.

Did they intend to climb up the butte, and openly attack us? What else should be their design? What other object could they have in surrounding it?

Only about a dozen had approached under cover of the wagon. Was it likely that so few of them would assail us boldly and openly? No. Beyond a doubt, they had some other design?

Ha! what means that blue column slowly curling upward? It is smoke!

See! Another and another—a dozen of them! From all sides they spring up, encircling the mound!

Hark to those sounds! the 'swish' of burning grass—the crackle of kindling sticks! They are making fires around us!

The columns were at first filmy, and then grew thicker and more dense. They spread out and joined each other—they became attracted towards the rocky mass—they fell against its sides, and wreathing upward, wrapped its summit in their ramifications. The platform was soon enveloped in the cloud!

We saw the savages upon the plain—dimly, as if through a crape. Those behind their horses still continued their fire; the others were dismounting.

They abandoned their horses, and appeared to advance on foot; their forms, through the magnifying mist, loomed spectral and gigantic!

They were visible only for a moment. The smoke rolled its thick volume around the summit, and shrouded them from our sight.

We no longer saw our enemy or the earth. The sky was obscured—even the rock on which we stood was no longer visible, nor one of us to the other!

Through all continued the firing upon the plain; the bullets hurtled around our heads, and the clamour of our foe reached our ears with fierce thrilling import.

We heard the crackling of fagots, and the spurting hissing noise of many fires; but perceived no blaze—only the thick smoke rising in continuous waves, and every moment growing denser around us.

We could bear it no longer; we were half suffocated. Any form of death before that. Was it too late to reach our horses? Doubtless, they were already snatched a way. No matter: we could not remain there. In five minutes, we must have yielded to the fearful asphyxia.

'No! never! let us die as we had determined, with arms in our hands!'

Voices husky and hoarse made answer in the affirmative.

We sprang to our feet, and came together—so that we could feel each other. We grasped our guns, and got ready our knives and pistols. We made our way to the edge of the rock, and, sliding down, assured ourselves of the path. We groped downward, guided by the granite walls on each side. We went not with caution, but in the very recklessness of a desperate need. We were met by the masses of smoke still rolling upwards. Further down, we felt the caloric as we came nearer to the crackling fires.

We heeded them not, but rushed madly forward, till we had cleared both the cloud and the flames, and stood in the open air.

It was but escaping from the fires of hell to rush into the midst of its demons. On all sides, they surrounded us with poised spears and brandished clubs. Amidst their loud yells, we scarcely heard the crackling of our guns and pistols; and those who fell to our shots were soon lost to our sight behind the bodies of others who crowded forward to encompass us.

For a short while, we kept together, and fought, back to back, facing our foes; but we were soon separated; and each struggled with a dozen assailants around him.

The struggle was not protracted. So far as I was concerned, it ended almost on the instant of my being separated from my comrades. A blow from behind, as of a club striking me upon the skull, deprived me of consciousness, leaving me only the one last thought—that it was death!

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WEATHER.

As there is no topic of conversation so universal as that of the Weather, so there is none upon which so many false and foolish things are spoken. Considering that it is the single subject upon which a very large and respectable body of persons consider themselves qualified to speak confidently, and that it forms the medium of conversation even among the highest and most intelligent classes, it is quite surprising how ill apprehended and misunderstood a thing it is. The majority of our fellow-countrymen do not regard the truth even in respect to the passing indications of the weather, but observe, 'A beautiful day, sir—a very beautiful day, sir,' when one is glistening after a recent shower; or 'A terrible day this, sir—a most terrible day,' when the clouds are lifting visibly and it is promising fair; not, it is true, with the intention of wilful misrepresentation, but because they imagine a positive statement of some kind to be more genial and conciliatory in the eyes of a stranger than a more moderate remark which has only truth and soberness to recommend it; or it may, perhaps, be one of those many symptoms which Mr Thomas Carlyle has observed to be prevailing amongst us, of the universal hollowness and decay of the human race. Certainly so the matter stands, and we would recommend to the conscientious the observation, 'Magnificent weather for the turnips, sir,' as the sole meteorological remark in wet weather which combines the advantages of enthusiasm and fact. That we are not overstating the looseness with which Society is apt to speak upon this important subject, may be tested by any of our readers upon his introduction to the first communicative stranger he may meet on road or rail, whom he will find to be quite easily driven from his original assertion, that is (for instance) 'Lovely weather,' into allowing, with more or less polite candour, that it is 'misty,' nevertheless, and 'raw,' and 'cold,' and—finally—quite unseasonable.' If it is not worth a man's while to defend a position, he should not take it up; and yet how few there are who will either make a stand for a truth, or expose a fallacy in connection with this subject. We had once the privilege of being in the same carriage with a couple of judges of the land, whom we will call A and B, and a high sheriff of his county, C. A, since deceased, was one of the cleverest and most genial men that ever sat on the bench, but testy withal, and excessively impatient of a dull remark. B, on the other hand, was the pink of politeness and courtesy. C was excessively anxious to be agreeable to his learned companions, who were also his guests, and like many other excellent and by no means stupid persons, he thought the Weather would be a capital topic to commence what he intended should eventually become an animated and agreeable conversation.

'I think we shall have a change in the weather soon, my lord,' remarked C, as soon as the horses were in motion, to A, who was the senior judge.

A looked contemptuously at the speaker, and replied sharply, 'Why, sir, why?' after the manner of the late Samuel Johnson.

'Because, my lord, the moon is changing.'

'The moon!' exclaimed A, with an irritation that turned him purple in an instant; 'because your

grandmother is changing, you mean. Can you be such a fool, Mr High Sheriff, as to believe that the moon has anything to do with it?'

This present writer sat aghast at the unexpected outbreak; but the unfortunate country gentleman who had provoked it, quite collapsed, and retired into himself at once, like a hermit-crab into his shell. He had broken the ice of conversation with a vengeance, and going down through it, head first, after such a fashion, was never again able to appear above the surface.

'Really, Brother A,' observed B, sincerely grieved by the injury thus inflicted by his learned colleague, 'you seem to me exceedingly hard upon our friend here. It is the opinion of many persons of good judgment that the moon does certainly influence the weather. I confess, I believe myself'—

'Then all I have to say,' broke in his senior, taking out from his pocket that edition of Lucullus without which he never travelled—'all I have to say is this—you are as great a fool, Brother B, as C is.'

After which we concluded our drive in silence.

There are few, however, who have that force of character and power of flat contradiction which were so characteristic of the late lamented A. In his presence, the conciliatory and gregarious stranger would not have been permitted to use the word 'unseasonable' in connection with the weather with that impunity which is accorded to him by all companies in every class of railway carriage—the great probability being that the weather is *not* unseasonable, and that his remark is nonsense. Upon the whole, it is likely that the weather is a great deal more consistent than the speaker, and can be predicted of, from year to year, with far greater certainty. The fact is, the weather has many enemies, and therefore evil tales are falsely told of it. The newspaper writers regard it as their prey, to revile—since abuse, as in the human subject, is easier, and fills up more space than praise—whenever there is a lack of political or social victims; while all old people—*laudatores temporis acti*—delight in declaring that the weather has 'fallen off' (where from and where to, we wonder!), and is by no means the charming thing it used to be. This last is an opinion which has too often found expression in the works of those who have had some literary and scientific pretensions—who, in a word, ought to have known better.

Thus Pinkerton, in his *Geography*, writes as follows: 'Many observers endowed with philosophical skill and candid judgment have agreed that, since the year 1775, a considerable change has taken place in the temperature of the year, both in Great Britain and Ireland. The winters in general have been more moist and mild, and the summers more humid and cold, than will be found on an average of preceding years.' A Mr John Williams of Pitmaston published a book in 1806 upon the changes in the climate of Britain, wherein he looks forward to the time when the increasing humidity of the summers will prevent this country from producing any wheat. Dr Thomas Garnett, in two quarto volumes which appeared about the same time, entitled *A Tour through the Highlands and part of the Western Isles of Scotland*, endorses the above forebodings. A writer in *Brande's Journal of Science* for the year 1818, indulges himself in the following gloomy paragraphs: 'That for several centuries past the climate of England has undergone a very material change for the worse, appears demonstrated by the most irresistible historical evidence; nor can there, indeed, be a doubt that the springs are now later, and the summers shorter, and that those seasons are colder and more humid than they were in the youthful days of many persons, and those not very aged, who are now alive. We learn from our old chronicles that the grape has formerly been cultivated in England for the manufacture of wine; but we now know, that even with much care and attention

it can scarcely be brought to ripen a scanty crop under walls exposed to the sun, sheltered from cold wind, and in every respect in the most favourable aspect.' 'Nay,' says he, 'on ground where the vine once flourished, the apple has of late years scarcely ripened; and we are informed on good authority, that it is now sixteen years since the orchards have afforded a plentiful crop. It is really melancholy to think that at no very remote period, our posterity may be in all probability in the same situation in regard to cider, that we are now placed in, in respect to wine.'

Even Mr Knight, the celebrated horticulturist, entertained the idea that some alteration in the character of the seasons was discernible during his own recollection—only his account of the change is almost diametrically opposite to those of the preceding authorities. In a paper read before the Horticultural Society in 1829, he says: 'There are, I believe, few persons who have noticed, and who can recollect the state of the climate of England half a century ago, who will not be found to agree in opinion, that considerable changes have taken place in it; and that our winters are now generally warmer than they were at that period. My own habits and pursuits, from a very early period of my life to the present time, have led me to expose myself much to the weather in all seasons of the year, and under all circumstances; and no doubt whatever remains in my mind, but that our winters are generally a good deal less severe than formerly, our springs more cold and ungenial, our summers, and particularly the latter parts of them, as warm at least as they formerly were, and our autumns considerably warmer.' Mr Nicholas Whitley, in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, for 1850, observes that 'there is every reason to believe that the winters have been acquiring a more genial character;' and finally, even the Registrar-general of England asserts: 'From a careful examination of the fall of rain (year by year) from the year 1815, it would seem that the annual fall is becoming smaller, and that there is but little probability that the large deficiency will be made up by excess in future years.'

The weather-mongers, therefore, not only vary in their assertions, but absolutely contradict one another. One says the summers are getting colder and moister; another, that they are as warm, if not warmer, and that there is less water in the rivers during that season; a third asserts that the seasons are changed, because the woods have been cut down; a fourth writes a book to prove that it is because the plantations have increased. All are agreed in one thing only—wherein it will be presently shewn that they are wrong—namely, in the falling off in the temperature of the spring, or the more ungenial nature of that season compared with the springs of former years.

Under these circumstances, the Marquis of Tweeddale, president of the Meteorological Society, offered a prize in June 1859 for the best essay on this subject: 'Whether the amount of rainfall in the western parts of Europe, and more particularly in Scotland, is less now than it formerly was.' Of this prize, Mr T. F. Jamieson of Ellon, Aberdeenshire, was the gainer, and to his interesting little pamphlet* we are indebted for what we may fairly consider to be a final settlement of this vexed question. The only gauges which this gentleman found to be continuous and reliable registers of the rainfall for any great number of years, were two—the one at Greenwich, and one kept by Mr Smith of Carbeth House, in Stirlingshire, each of which embraced a period of forty-five years. To the results procured from these, Mr Jamieson has added those from eleven other authentic registers recorded for a less but still a considerable period. 'When all

are examined,' says he, 'we find almost the whole agree in shewing a deficiency in the average amount of rain for the last few years; but when we come to seek for evidence of a gradual or progressive diminution, going on from the beginning of the present century to the present time, we fail to find any satisfactory proof of such being the case.' There has been a slight decrease here and there, but no permanent or even general alteration whatever. In Edinburgh, indeed, there has been a diminution in the rainfall for thirty-five years; but at Oxford, on the other hand, there has been a decided augmentation. In the long and faithful record kept at Carbeth House, where the gauge has remained at the same spot, and been chronicled by the same observer, the average of the first thirty years is 42·6 inches, and of the last thirty 42·8 inches.

Statements regarding the alteration of climate, both here and elsewhere, have been made with the same looseness and falsity as those concerning the weather. 'Greenland has been quoted as a striking example of decreasing temperature. Discovered by an Ice-lander about the beginning of the tenth century, it was soon after occupied by Scandinavian colonists; and on East Greenland, the settlements increased up to near three hundred villages or farms. "This country," says a writer in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* (vol. viii. p. 200), "it is well known, was lost to the rest of the world by the setting in of the polar ice about the year 1406. Since this period, it has not been considered accessible, all attempts to reach it having failed; and the fate of the colonists has been constantly wrapped in that perfect obscurity which renders it a subject of the most intense interest." And another writer in the *Journal of the Royal Institution* tells us: "Greenland received its name from its verdant aspect, and an extensive commerce existed between it and Norway till the beginning of the fifteenth century, since which period all communication with East Greenland has ceased; and what was once known respecting it is almost buried in oblivion, and its coast has become blockaded by an immense collection of ice, so that, till within these few months, no vessel could approach near enough even to see the land."—(Vol. iv. p. 281, 1818.)

'And Arago, to a similar effect: "Le Groenland (*Greenland, terre verte*) offre l'exemple le plus frappant, qu'on puisse citer de la détérioration des climats septentrionaux. Des colonies nombreuses s'y établirent et faisaient encore, dans le commencement du XVe siècle, un commerce très animé avec le Norvège; mais à partir de cette époque, toutes les communications ont cessé. Les glaces, en s'accumulant d'année en année sur la côte orientale, ont empêché les bâtimens d'y aborder."—Arago, *Sur l'Etat Thermométrique du Globe Terrestre*. Now, all this story about East Greenland—its verdant aspect and the hapless fate of its settlements, suddenly cut off from the rest of the world by the launching down of the polar ice—turns out, it would seem, to be a mere myth, arising from a misconception of the name. Recent exploring expeditions, sent out by the Danish government for the express purpose of clearing up the matter, have shewn that there never were any European colonies on what we call East Greenland, and the origin of such a legend seems to have been this: The original colony had been about the southern promontory, near Cape Farewell, while other settlements established themselves further west, or rather to the north-west, so that the older establishment came to be termed *Estre Bygd*, or the Eastern Settlement, and the other *Vestre Bygd*, or the Western Settlement; and after the colonists had been exterminated by the plague—which prevailed about the year 1402, and reached even this remote region—aided also very likely by the enmity of the Esquimaux, or other causes now unknown to us, the name of East or Old Greenland gave rise to the notion we have alluded to.'

* *The Tweeddale Prize Essay on the Rainfall.* By T. F. Jamieson. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh.

Here, in Scotland, since some of the higher mountains almost reach the limit of perpetual snow, we have a peculiarly delicate test of the temperature. 'If our climate had been materially warmer or less snowy in former times, we should expect that no snow would have remained on them throughout the summer; and had it been more severe, the higher peaks would have been constantly invested with an icy cap; but from all that I can learn, matters appear to have been pretty much the same of old as they are now, for some Highland proprietors held their estates on condition of presenting a snow-ball any day of the year it might be required, and some stories are told of the occasional difficulty that occurred in fulfilling the quit-rent. Monro of Foulis is said, by Pennant, to have held a forest in the neighbourhood of Ben Wyvis under such a charter.'

Mr Jamieson disputes the idea of a greater or less amount of forest having any influence upon the rainfall whatever, and even denies any climatological effect to drainage. 'In the first place,' says he, 'there is no clear evidence of any progressive diminution, as may be seen from inspection of the tables I have produced. And the decrease within the last few years is as strongly marked at Orkney as anywhere else; but no one, I imagine, will assert that land-drainage could have thus affected the rainfall of these remote islands. Can it be thought the drying of a few damp fields would have such an influence, so long as an extensive ocean encircles these narrow shreds of land, and throws its spray almost quite over them?'

In the Lake district of the north of England, the annual quantity of rain increases from 47 inches on the coast to 147 inches on the hills. 'This enormous difference does not arise from the coast-lands being better drained, but seems to be the result of these high mountains being situated in a narrow part of our island, with seas near them on both sides, and the air, loaded with moisture, whether it blows from the east or west, strikes upon these hills, and is forced up their slopes, as up an inclined plane, until, becoming cooled in these higher regions, it lets fall its vapour in copious showers.'

Upon the whole, this little pamphlet forms the most complete refutation of those foolish theories formed upon insufficient data, which we find in everybody's mouth, and even in some sensible men's writings, concerning the weather. Our Climate has suffered no alteration since Britain was inhabited by man and woman, nor is it likely to change, whatever man or woman may say to the contrary. 'Geology teaches us, indeed, that wonderful changes have taken place in the earth's climate. In Greenland, Scoresby found coal strata shewing impressions of tropical plants; and here, in our own country, we find Britain to have been at one time a land of palms and coco-nuts, with monkeys climbing amongst the branches; at another, the seat of giant glaciers and perpetual snow, where no living sound might have been heard but the hoarse baying of the reindeer, or the growl of the northern bear. The passage from one extreme to the other was doubtless very gradual; indeed, we have proof that the rigorous climate of the drift period came on by degrees, and did not at once attain its full severity; ages, we have reason to believe, passed away, and whole tribes of animals flourished and decayed. The cause of these mighty changes is still wrapped in obscurity, but seems to have had some connection with the relative distribution of land and water. Whole continents have risen and sunk, mountain-ranges have been lifted up within the snow-line, and have subsided again, until their summits alone remained as a set of islands in the midst of the sea. The changes that have taken place since the dawn of history are, however, slight, and confined within narrow limits. Indeed, it is still doubtful whether any perceptible difference has been estab-

lished. The same plants are still characteristic of the countries that produced them in the days of Moses. The geographical limits of the olive, the vine, and the palm-tree, seem to be the same as they were three thousand years ago; and as even a slight alteration would affect the ripening of their fruits, we cannot suppose much change to have occurred. Seed-time and harvest have remained the same, so far as we can discover, neither has the vintage varied. All things point to very similar climatic conditions in the early days of our race: and this is not to be wondered at, for the great world-clock moves slowly and deliberately, but inevitably; and in the long record of the earth's history, the whole human period, so far as it has yet run, counts but as yesterday. The law, however, seems to be motion and progress—what has been is not to be. Climates and creations grow old and pass away; they are but the garment of the Eternal, and as a vesture does He change them.'

A WORD WITH DESPENDENCY.

'RAISE thine eyes, raise thine head,
Govern the grief thy soul that wrings;
Of all on this rocking earth that tread,
Man is the noblest of breathing things.
Shame not the sunshine with moody brow;
Strengthen thy heart
For a manlier part,
And look like a king, as thou art, below.'

'I say not but others have sorrows as great,
But I am weak, and they weigh me down;
I have wrestled against the ills of fate,
But not for me is the victor's crown.
My heart is aching with many a wound;
I am weary and faint;
I am well content
To lay me down and die on the ground.'

'Knowest thou not that the spirit of Ill
Goes forth through the world with chain'd feet,
That though he may wreak his vengeful will
To trouble and torture all he meet,
Yet he is but a slave, whose work and way
Is traced by a power
Who appoints his hour,
And gives him to chasten, but seldom to slay!'

'Lost in the forest, wrecked on the seas,
Warring or passive, in hope or grief,
Men suffer and sink: what matter to these
Though sterner endurance might bring relief?
Our sinews can bear but a measured strain;
Through the torturing night
We watch for the light,
But die ere sunrise, o'ermatched with pain!'

'Small were thy loss, should the Fates be hard;
Thou diest like a warrior, sword in hand.
Great will thy gain be, and bright thy reward,
If thou in the evil days dost stand.
Tend thou Faith's lamp with a vigilant care;
When skies are most dark,
It shall yield thee its spark,
Nor fail till the morning breaks on the air.'

E. C. B.

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